

AMENDMENT TO THE DRAWINGS

Figures 1, 2, 6A, and 16 have been amended. The attached sheets of formal drawings replace the original sheets including Figures 1, 2, 6, 6A, 6B, and 16.

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-23 were pending in this application. According to the September 20, 2005 Office Action, claims 1-4, 7-9, and 11-23 were rejected and claims 5, 6, and 10 were objected to. Applicant has amended claims 1-5, 7, 10-13, and 16-23. Accordingly, claims 1-23 are under consideration. Applicant maintains that the amendments do not introduce any new matter.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant notes with appreciation that the Examiner has indicated that claims 5, 6, and 10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response thereto, applicant has amended claim 5 to be an independent claim that includes the limitations of claim 1 and has amended claim 10 to be an independent claim that includes the limitations of claim 1.

Amendments to the Specification

Applicant has amended the specification at paragraphs [0006], [0023], and [0026] to correct several typographical errors.

Objection to the Drawings

In response to the Examiner's objection to Figure 1, applicant has amended this Figure to include a "Prior Art" designation. In response to the Examiner's objection regarding the drawings not including reference numeral "60", applicant has amended Figure 16 to include this reference numeral.

Upon further review of the specification, applicant notes that the specification mentions reference numeral "51" but that this reference numeral is not shown in the Figures. Accordingly, applicant has amended Figures 2 and 6A to include this reference numeral. Similarly, applicant also notes that the specification mentions "space A" with reference to Figure 16 but that this Figure does not include an "A" designation. Accordingly, applicant has amended Figure 16 to include this designation.

Objections to the Claims

In response to the Examiner's objection to the numbering of the claims, applicant has amended previously presented claims 17-24 to renumber these claims as claims 16-23. In accordance with this change, applicant has amended renumbered claims 18-21 and 23 to correct the dependency of the claims to reflect the renumbering. Applicant respectfully submits that because the amendments to claims 18-21 and 23 are merely clarifying in nature and only make explicit that which was implicit in the claims prior to the amendments, they are not narrowing amendments.

Applicant notes that hereinafter, the claims will be referenced according to their renumbered form.

Rejection of Claims 11, 13, and 17-23 under U.S.C. 112, Second Paragraph

The Examiner rejected previously presented claims 11, 13, and 17-23 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In particular, the Examiner indicated that "the free end" as recited by claims 11 and 13 lacks antecedent basis. In response thereto, applicant has amended claims 11 and 13 to recite "the end" for consistency with claim 1. Upon further review of claim 12, applicant notes that this claim also recites "the free end," which lacks antecedent basis. Accordingly, applicant has also amended this claim to recite "the end." The Examiner also indicated that "A garment clip" as recited by claims 18-21 lacks antecedent basis. In response thereto, applicant has amended claims 18-21 to recite "An end-clip" for consistency with claim 17. Applicant respectfully submits that because the amendments to claims 11-13 and 18-21 are merely clarifying in nature and only make explicit that which was implicit in the claims prior to the amendments, they are not narrowing amendments.

With respect to claims 17-23, the Examiner indicated that "the carrier member" lacks antecedent basis. In response thereto, applicant has amended independent claims 17 and 22 to recite "a carrier member" as an element of the end-clip and to also recite the interconnection of the "carrier member" to the "arm" and to the "pressing member" of the end-clip.

Rejection of Claims 1-4, 7-9, and 11-23 in view of Gouldson

The Examiner rejected previously presented claims 1-4, 7-9, and 11-23 as unpatentable,

35 U.S.C. 102(e), in view of Gouldson, U.S. patent 6,715,650 (hereinafter Gouldson). Beginning with independent claim 1, the Examiner indicated that Gouldson teaches through the end-clip shown in Figure 10(d) the end-clip as recited by claim 1. In response to the Examiner's rejection, applicant has amended claim 1 and has also amended claims 2-4 and 7 to be consistent with claim 1. Claim 1 now recites in part, an end-clip comprising:

a connecting part with a first end and a second end ...;

an arm joined to the second end of the connecting part ...; and

a stop member in the form of an elongated cantilever that has a free end and an opposing end, the opposing end being connected to at least one of the connecting part and the arm

Applicant respectfully submits that contrary to amended claim 1, Gouldson does not teach a stop member in the form of an "elongated cantilever." Specifically, in the Office Action, the Examiner equated arm 15/36 of the end-clip of Gouldson Figure 10(d) to the arm of claim 1, equated the perpendicular extension that extends upward from bar 14 and connects to arm 15/36 to the connecting part of claim 1, and equated web 49(d) to the stop member of claim 1. As shown in Figure 10(d), web 49(d) is not in the form of an "elongated cantilever" but rather, is in the form of a "continuous web" that spans from bar 14, along the perpendicular extension, to arm 15/36. Accordingly, Gouldson fails to teach claim 1, in addition to claims 2-4, 7-8, and 11-15, which depend therefrom.

Turning to independent claim 16, the Examiner indicated that the end-clip of Gouldson Figure 10(d) discloses the end-clip as recited by claim 16. In response to the Examiner's rejection, applicant has amended claim 16. Accordingly, claim 16 now recites in part an end-clip that includes:

an elongated pressing member ...; and

a stop member ..., the stop member being located above the pressing member at a distance so that the pressing member contacts the stop member when a garment is inserted between the pressing member and the bar;

wherein the stop member is resilient so as to flex and exert a counter force against the pressing member when the pressing member contacts the stop member when the garment is inserted between the pressing member and the bar.

In the Office Action, the Examiner equated web 49(d) of the end-clip of Gouldson Figure 10(d) to the stop member of claim 16 and also equated pressing member 38 to the pressing member of claim 16. Applicant respectfully submits that contrary to claim 16, Gouldson does not teach that web 49(d) “is resilient so as to *flex* and exert a counter force against” pressing member 38 when pressing member 38 contacts web 49(d). The Examiner appeared to indicate in the Office Action that because web 49(d) is made of plastic, it is also resilient. Applicant respectfully submits that because web 49(d) is made of plastic does not mean that web 49(d) also flexes when contacted by pressing member 38. In particular, applicant notes that pressing member 38 contacts web 49(d) by extending upward along the direction in which web 49(d) spans from bar 14 to arm 15/36. Applicant submits that given this configuration together with web 49(d) being formed as a “continuous web,” web 49(d) is unlikely “to flex” and exert a counter force against pressing member 38 when pressing member 38 contacts web 49(d).

Accordingly, for the foregoing reasons, applicant submits that Gouldson does not teach claim 16.

Turning to independent claim 17, the Examiner indicated that the end-clip of Gouldson Figure 10(d) also discloses the end-clip as recited by claim 17. In response to the Examiner’s rejection, applicant has amended claim 17. Claim 17 now recites in part, an end-clip comprising:

a carrier member ...; and

an elongated pressing member connected to and supported by the carrier member ...;

wherein the carrier member and the pressing member each increases in width towards the connection between the pressing member and the carrier member, the increased width of the carrier member and the pressing member providing reinforcement.

In the Office Action, the Examiner equated mount 40 and pressing member 38 of the Gouldson Figure 10(d) end-clip to the carrier element and pressing member of claim 17.

Applicant respectfully submits that contrary to claim 17, mount 40 and pressing member 38 do not increase "in width towards the connection between" the mount and the pressing member. Rather, mount 40 and pressing member 38 appear to have a uniform width throughout (Gouldson, column 7, lines 13-16; Figure 4). As noted by the Examiner, there is a stiffening rib formed at the connection between mount 40 and pressing member 38. Notably, while this stiffening rib acts to provide reinforcement like the increased width of the carrier member and the pressing member of claim 17, this stiffening rib is different from the increased width of the carrier member and the pressing member of claim 17. Accordingly, applicant submits that Gloudson does not teach claim 17, in addition to claims 18-21, which depend therefrom.

Turning to independent claim 22, the Examiner rejected this claim for reasons similar to claim 17. In response thereto, applicant has amended claim 22 similar to claim 17. Accordingly, applicant submits that Gloudson does not teach claim 22, in addition to claim 23 which depends therefrom, for reasons similar to claim 17.

Conclusion

Since Gloudson fails to teach or suggest applicant's invention as now set forth in amended claims 1-4, 7-9, and 11-23, applicant submits that these claims are clearly allowable. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of these claims, together with claim 5, 6, and 10, indicated as allowable, are therefore requested.

Applicant earnestly believes that this application is now in condition to be passed to issue, and such action is also respectfully requested. However, if the Examiner deems it would in any way facilitate the prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone applicant's counsel at the number below.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450, on March 13, 2006:

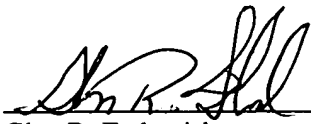
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Name of applicant, assignee or
Registered Representative

Signature

March 13, 2006
Date of Signature

DAM:GRF/db

Respectfully submitted,


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